

**Top Secret**



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

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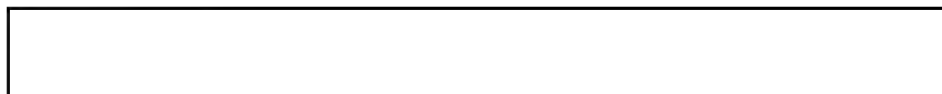


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PANAMA: Torrijos wants meeting with President Nixon  
on canal issue.

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PANAMA: GENERAL TORRIJOS WANTS TO MEET WITH  
PRESIDENT NIXON TO DISCUSS THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS.

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TORRIJOS IS CONVINCED THAT THE MAJOR TREATY  
ISSUES CAN BE RESOLVED ONLY THROUGH DIRECT CONVER-  
SATIONS WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. HE THINKS THE MEET-  
ING COULD BE HELD AFTER THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

TORRIJOS HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF THE NE-  
GOTIATING PROCESS AND HE IS RELUCTANT TO DELEGATE  
AUTHORITY ON ISSUES THAT MIGHT AFFECT HIS POWER PO-  
SITION. HE BELIEVES IN PERSONAL DIPLOMACY AND IS  
PERSUADED THAT IF MEN AT THE TOP DESIRE A SETTLE-  
MENT AN AGREEMENT CAN BE FRAMED IN RATHER SHORT  
ORDER, WITH TECHNICIANS LATER WORKING OUT WHAT HE  
CONSIDERS "MERE DETAILS."

FROM JULY 1971 THROUGH MARCH 1972 TORRIJOS  
KEPT HIS NEGOTIATING TEAM ON A TIGHT LEASH. NEGO-  
TIATIONS WERE HALTED IN MARCH AS PANAMA ATTEMPTED  
TO REFINE ITS POSITION. THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIA-  
TORS, THE FOREIGN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMISSION,  
AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FINALLY DEVELOPED A POSI-  
TION WHICH THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS DESCRIBED AS  
THE FIRST "REASONABLE" WORKING PAPER. THE PAPER  
NEEDED TORRIJOS' APPROVAL, BUT HE WAS INVOLVED IN  
DOMESTIC MATTERS AND WAS UNWILLING TO FOCUS ON THE  
CANAL ISSUE.

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS TORRIJOS HAS SOUGHT  
TO DEVELOP A POSITION OF STRENGTH FROM WHICH TO  
NEGOTIATE. TO THIS END HE IS TRYING TO HAVE THE  
UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEET IN PANAMA IN MARCH, HE  
HAS SAID HE WILL NOT ACCEPT US CANAL PAYMENTS, AND  
HE HAS HAD PANAMANIAN AMBASSADORS AROUND THE WORLD  
PUBLICIZE PANAMA'S SIDE ON THE CANAL ZONE ISSUE.

TORRIJOS UNDOUBTEDLY FEELS IT POLITICALLY NEC-  
ESSARY TO GAIN JURISDICTIONAL CONTROL OVER THE  
CANAL ZONE. BEYOND THAT, HE WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT  
THE BEST DEAL HE COULD GET FROM THE US. SHORT OF

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PROVOKING A CRISIS, HE PROBABLY FEELS THAT A MEETING WITH TOP US OFFICIALS IS THE ONLY WAY HE CAN BE SURE OF THE LIMITS OF THE US POSITION. SUCH A MEETING, MOREOVER, WOULD INCREASE TORRIJOS' PRESTIGE AND HELP HIM SELL AN AGREEMENT DOMESTICALLY. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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